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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

news magazine



Bob Reccord nominated to head NAMB

Bob Reccord, former chairman of the Implementation Task Force which is overseeing the creation of the new North American Mission Board, has been officially nominated to serve as NAMB's first president.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

MAY 06 1997

Newsmagazine prayer focus set for May 18

Highlighting the theme, "Inform...Inspire...Involve...", Arkansas Baptists will have the opportunity to observe the 1997 *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* Day of Prayer May 18. The annual day of prayer is a reminder for Baptist congregations throughout the state to support their state Baptist paper by praying for and promoting its ministry as Arkansas Baptists' primary communications tool.

The theme was unveiled during last fall's Arkansas Baptist State Convention annual meeting. It coincides with the *Newsmagazine*'s updated design which debuted in January.

According to *Newsmagazine* editor Trennis Henderson, the theme emphasizes three key aspects of the publication's ongoing ministry efforts. "Obviously, information is a major part of what we provide as a newspaper," he pointed out. "But we're not just any newspaper. We're a Christian newspaper and more specifically we're an Arkansas Baptist newspaper. We're committed to our partnership with the state convention."

He noted that information provided through the *Newsmagazine* ranges from local church news to statewide training events to international ministry efforts.

Inspiration is another significant role provided by the *Newsmagazine*. Whether focusing on local church ministries, major missions offerings or ministry projects around the world, stories of inspiration can challenge and encourage readers throughout the state.

Involvement also is a primary focus for *Newsmagazine* articles. Henderson noted that readers can learn about opportunities for involvement through mission trips, disaster relief efforts, training conferences and numerous other ministry options.

Church subscription options

Affirming that more than 800 Arkansas Baptist churches currently provide *Newsmagazine* subscriptions to their members through the cost-saving Every Resident Family Plan or Group Plan, Henderson added that many other churches throughout the state do not yet take advantage of that opportunity for their members. Churches interested in subscribing to the paper may contact the *Newsmagazine* staff for more information.

Specific ways a local church can observe the *Newsmagazine* Day of Prayer include:

- Enlist a church leader to share a brief personal testimony about the impact of using the *Newsmagazine* to gain information about Baptist ministry efforts at home and around the world.

- Schedule a prayer time during the worship service to express thanks for the *Newsmagazine*'s communications ministry among Arkansas Baptists and to pray for God's continued guidance in this effort.

- Create a bulletin board display which emphasizes the *Newsmagazine*'s role in informing Arkansas Baptists about such vital ministry issues as partnership missions, church growth and training events.

- Publish the Day of Prayer date and theme in your church newsletter or bulletin.

- Provide sign-up sheets at the conclusion of the worship service and invite church members to sign up for a subscription to the *Newsmagazine*.

A sheet of clip art highlighting this year's Day of Prayer is available from the *Newsmagazine*. To obtain the clip art or to receive additional information about the 1997 Day of Prayer, contact the *Newsmagazine* at P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; phone 800-838-2272 or 376-4971, ext. 5153.

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

n e w s m a g a z i n e



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Welfare and the church

Forum participants cite need for church involvement in welfare reform

Russell M. Dilday

Associate Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Discussing the church's impact on the future of social policy, representatives from several Arkansas Baptist churches gathered for a Welfare Reform Forum April 17 at the Baptist Building in Little Rock.

The program, sponsored by the church and community ministries section of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention missions department, featured essays on welfare reform from Jeff Pounders, professor of sociology at Ouachita Baptist University; Laura Rhea, executive director of the Arkansas Rice Depot; and Larry Toller, the governor's liaison to the Department of Human Services.

Forum convener Sandy Wisdom-Martin told participants their churches were selected for invitation "because of your involvement in ministry" and that they would explore "what welfare reform will look like, what does it mean for Arkansas and how should the church be ready to respond?"

Wisdom-Martin explained that the missions department called the meeting because of recent state legislation changing social welfare policy, which she said "is now a reality that's coming very quickly and will be a radical change in the mindset of guaranteeing Arkansans a certain standard of living."

While similar federal legislation calls for a five-year limit for welfare, she noted, "Arkansas made it two years and you're off. It will be a big challenge to churches, not only to hand out food and clothing, but to take families under their wings, mentor them and work with them to find employment."

"The churches will have to step up to meet the needs of people. It gives us a good opportunity to do what Christ said: to feed the poor, to clothe the naked."

Wisdom-Martin said that she hopes churches will support the state by helping "move people from dependency to sufficiency by providing on-the-job training, education, work experience and skills training, with the goal of moving them to full-time employment."

Pounders shared his view of "Social Welfare and its Impact on the Community of Faith," telling participants that while "one of the questions for the meeting will be, 'What will welfare look like?' the answer is, 'We don't know.'"

He defined social welfare as "the institution in modern industrial society that

functions to promote interdependence and to deal with the problem of dependence."

Historically, Pounders noted, there have been "eight degrees of charity" in social welfare. In order from the least to the greatest:

- Give, but with regret and reluctance.
- Give cheerfully, but not proportionately to the distress of the sufferer.
- Give cheerfully and proportionately, but not until asked.
- Give cheerfully, proportionately and unsolicited, but put it into the poor man's hand, thereby exciting in him the painful emotion of shame.
- Give in such a way that the distressed may receive the bounty and know the benefactor, without being known to the benefactor.
- Give so that one knows the object of one's bounty, but is unknown to that person.
- Bestow charity so that the benefactor may not know the relieved persons, nor they the name of the benefactor.
- Anticipate charity by preventing poverty.

Pounders then advocated a ninth degree: "Help others help themselves by helping others. Not only help them, but help them in a way where they are not only off welfare but a part of the solution of helping others."

Relating a quote, he said, "I would not defer to government the high and holy responsibility of caring for the poor, the widows and the orphans. That is the church's responsibility."

"That should be true today," he concluded. "The worst thing that could happen is, with the welfare process, the church is nowhere to be seen."

Rhea showed participants "The Face of Hunger in Arkansas" and its close ties to welfare, noting that "45,000 families in Arkansas have incomes so low they experience hunger at least once each month" and 152,000 children in the state experience hunger.

As director for the Arkansas Rice Depot, Rhea supervises the non-profit organization's work of coordinating food and fundraising efforts as well as the efforts of more than 350 church food pantries across the

state. "Last year," she added, "we gave away 2.6 million pounds of food through church food pantries and community food pantries."

She explained that "people are hungry because they are working in the service sector, at fast food restaurants. With the trend of two parents working and with day care, the numbers don't work. For a person working at McDonald's or Wal-Mart, they are going to have a difficult time. It's a real change from going to work for a company and having stability."

Rhea urged churches to provide day cares, jobs and food. "The easiest thing to do is open your doors once a month and give away food. You can go home and feel good.... The next level, and where I hope we are headed, is that God starts dealing with churches and it changes into a relationship with the clients

I am convinced this will not work if churches do not get involved.... This is a duty, a privilege and a responsibility of the church.

LARRY TOLLER

Governor's liaison to the Arkansas Department of Human Services

they are dealing with."

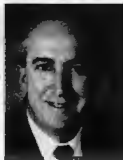
Toller, previewing newly-passed state legislation, noted, "I am convinced this will not work if churches do not get involved. The avenue I want to take is to get with church groups, because I am convinced the real people who ought to be doing this work aren't and the people who shouldn't be doing it are."

"My hope is that DHS won't have to see some of these people," emphasized Toller, a Southern Baptist. "My hope is that there will be a network of churches available to help and that DHS would only have to work with the most severe cases. This is a duty, a privilege and a responsibility of the church. It's a tremendous evangelical opportunity for us."

He also noted that the governor's office will be seeking volunteer organizations such as churches to help welfare recipients through teaching them life skills such as reading or overcoming substance abuse, work skills such as interview techniques, child care and transportation.

Forum participant David Smith, pastor of First Church in Piggott, responded, "If a lot of the problem of why the churches aren't doing anything is because of ignorance, this (new welfare legislation) is a good opportunity...of educating our churches and can be a way of opening doors. I see this as an exciting possibility instead of a problem."

A Pastor's Heart



Emil Turner

ABCS Executive Director

Some things are too awful to describe. Partial-birth abortion is one of those things. For a while, I was afraid that Arkansas would miss a golden opportunity to make this procedure illegal. I am glad our governor and other elected officials passed the bill to outlaw such procedures. And I am glad so many Arkansas Baptists encouraged them to do the right thing.

Woman's Viewpoint

Kayo Miller

Immanuel Church, Little Rock

I think that my view of missions is a little different in that I grew up as a missionary kid in Bangla, Thailand. Missions wasn't something that you had to think about, it was a way of life. Our lives revolved around telling people about Jesus.

Once back in the States, I grew accustomed to having to think about "missions" and not really doing anything about it.

A wonderful lady, Alla B. Gladden, decided that a few of us needed to be mentored. What a wonderful thing! She was incredibly wise and a godly woman. The definition of mentor is a trusted counselor or guide. This woman was truly a mentor. She taught us once again that missions is a way of life and encouraged us to teach others about missions.

Do you know someone who is a mentor? Do you have a mentor? Are you a mentor?

Take a minute and think back to those who have influenced your life. What was it about that person that made you stop

Now, we must remember these children need to be saved eternally. May God give us hearts to win those we have rescued.

■ Have you read *Emotional Wholeness* — Connecting with the Emotions of Jesus by Dick and Jane Mohline? (Treasure House, 1997). Dick is on staff at Harvard Avenue Baptist Church in Siloam Springs. He and Jane have written a great analysis of Jesus' emotions (the first such work I've ever read). Each chapter ends with an excellent summary and application section. This is a good book.

Executive director's schedule:

May 2-9 Executive Training Conference, S.C.

May 11 Mother's Day

May 12 (p.m.) Clear Creek Association

May 13 Chapel, First, Little Rock

May 15 (p.m.) Missions Dinner, Harmony Association

and listen and take to heart all that they said?

I have thought about the way her teaching was done by example; the way her life was led, the way she grew older gracefully, not just grew older. She always took time — never just sat by. She enjoyed young people, molding and training them. What a great heart and vision she had for missions.

This past week my mentor and friend went to be with the Lord. The void she left is great but so many have been "mentored" by her, so many left to rise up to lead and to mentor.

Although Jesus touched so many lives during His earthly mission, He sought help from others and to continue to carry His message to the world. In Matthew 9:37-38, He said, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Who are you guiding or mentoring to be out in the field beside you, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ?

Thank you, Alla B., for your incredible gift of teaching about missions.

Kayo Miller is Girls in Action director and Youth on Mission director at Immanuel Church in Little Rock.

quotes

"Being three years beyond our 70-year warranty, who am I to argue with the One who renews the warranty?"

—Al Major, age 73, serving second interim pastorate in Europe

"Now is the time for justice and protection of all minorities, whatever their faith may be."

—Denton Lotz, general secretary, Baptist World Alliance

"In a world full of hopelessness, emptiness, deceit and broken relationships, people are looking for something real."

—Randy Brantley, ABCS youth evangelism associate

ARKANSAS BAPTIST

new magazine

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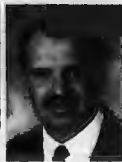
inform...inspire...involve...

Be in the know.

1997 Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine
Day of Prayer ❖ May 18

The downside of downsizing

Straight from the Editor



Tronnis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

It's there in black and white in Southern Baptist Convention bylaw 20: "The Executive Committee shall not have authority to control or direct the several boards, agencies and institutions of the Convention. This is the responsibility of trustees elected by the Convention and accountable directly to the Convention."

Somewhere along the road to convention restructuring, the spirit of that bylaw appears to have been sacrificed for the sake of expediency. Although the SBC Executive Committee may not be technically exercising "control" over convention-elected boards, the Executive Committee did establish the Implementation Task Force in 1995 to "analyze, study and take actions necessary...to facilitate the orderly and timely transitions" related to SBC restructuring.

A significant portion of those actions have included personnel issues. The number of employees at the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio & Television Commission is being cut from more than 500 down to 350 to accommodate the proposed structure of the new North American Mission Board.

The 10-member ITF has played a primary role in determining which

employees will be offered positions with the new agency and which ones will be terminated. Dismissing staff members is generally an administrative responsibility which may occasionally include action by a specific board. Any SBC agency being told by an Executive Committee-appointed task force which employees will be dismissed appears to be in direct conflict with SBC bylaw 20.

Beyond the technical aspects of the ITF's action, surely the decision to terminate 165 agency employees wasn't an initial goal of restructuring. Adding insult to injury for a number of long-time employees who are being fired, the ITF is expected to offer jobs to about 40 people not currently

working for any of the existing agencies.

Noting that there is no "delicate way to birth an organization," former ITF chairman Bob Reccord has acknowledged the creation of NAMB was neither easy nor painless. Reccord is expected to be elected as NAMB's first president in June.

It's understandable that lots of tough decisions have to be made in order to implement the convention-approved "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring plan. It also is understandable that some people will lose their jobs any time an organization "downsizes."

What is not understandable is why ITF members with no accountability to current agency trustees should be the ones taking the lead in ending the SBC-related careers of numerous competent and capable employees. Overseeing general structural changes approved by SBC messengers is one thing; implementing specific personnel changes without trustee input is quite another.

Southern Baptists leaders would do well to continue evaluating the current implementation process and determine whether the process is in keeping with the original spirit and goals of convention restructuring — and with SBC bylaw 20.



letters to the editor

Honor and obey covenants

Ed Tucker's letter, "Cooperate with the majority," in the April 17 issue of the *Newsmagazine* is lacking. It illustrates the desperate need of educating Arkansas Baptists.

The Constitution or Articles of Incorporation of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention "used to be" the guide and governor under the Lordship of Jesus Christ of Arkansas Baptists. Article X — Amendments, Section 1 reads, "The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws may be amended by a two thirds vote of the members voting and concurring in two successive annual meetings of the convention, except Article IV, which shall remain forever unalterable in substance."

The actions of November's convention regarding the selection of Ouachita Baptist University board members do not meet the requirements of Article V, Section 1 of the Bylaws. I was taught from the Bible, at OBU and in every Arkansas Baptist church to honor and obey our covenants of which the Articles of Incorporation are very important. Last year's action, if legal, would decimate Bylaw Article V.

The world says, "It's all right to violate our marriage, parental, financial, material

and even our spiritual agreements," but God says no. Joshua and Caleb were outvoted when asked to do what God commanded Israel, but they were right. How can we do less?

Bro. Barry King and I are related only by the blood and adoption of Jesus Christ. I'm not a part of the conservative or moderate efforts. I love OBU, my alma mater. I'm eternally thankful and indebted to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention for the support and encouragement to attend OBU.

It's time for Arkansas Baptists to lay aside the weapons of war toward each other. Let's be a family of God! There's no gain if we have to cheat or beat our brother. In a time when honesty and integrity is so unknown, let's demonstrate to a lost world what it means.

Jim Glover
Heber Springs, AR

Editor's Note: Bylaw Article V, Section 1 specifies that the state convention nominating committee will nominate people to fill vacancies on all convention boards and committees "not provided for otherwise." Arkansas Baptist messengers voted last November to "provide otherwise" by

adopting a reconciliation proposal between the state convention and Ouachita.

Keep the Sabbath holy

We are commanded to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." In *The Principles of the Kingdom*, L.T. Wallace pointed out that the day of rest is the second of the three great institutions of the Kingdom of God, the first being the family and the third being the church. Respect for the Lord's Day is essential to the well-being of both the family and the church.

We cannot help what others do in our decaying society. We can only be sure that we do not contribute to it ourselves. Christian people ought never to buy anything whatsoever on Sunday. This only requires the same planning and self-discipline that our godly parents exercised as a matter of course.

If all professing Christians would do this, the problem would be solved. Ungodly merchants who do not know Sunday from Monday would not take in enough on the Lord's Day to pay the light bill.

Clay Hale
El Dorado, AR

Bob Reccord, former chairman of the Implementation Task Force which is overseeing the creation of the new North American Mission Board, has been nominated to serve as NAMB's first president.

Reccord officially nominated as new NAMB president



Robert Reccord's nomination as the first president of the new North American Mission Board was officially made public April 24.

Reccord, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va., was presented to the proposed trustees of the new Southern Baptist agency by a 13-member search committee in a closed session at an Atlanta hotel. Those trustees will be asked to elect Reccord June 19, after they themselves are elected by Southern Baptist Convention messengers.

Reccord, 45, has been chairman of the Implementation Task Force, which has guided the SBC's downsizing from 19 agencies to 12 and the creation of NAMB. He told his congregation April 20 that he would accept the NAMB presidency if elected.

The new agency will support more than 5,000 missionaries and have an annual budget of \$70 million. Reccord himself will nominate the five vice presidents in the new structure following his own election.

Reccord voices surprise

Reccord acknowledged some Southern Baptists may question his selection, since he chaired the group that helped shape the agency he will now lead. He said such concern is "logical" but he hopes Southern Baptists will give him a chance. "I am as surprised as anybody to be sitting here," he said.

Reccord said he knew he was under consideration "a couple months" into the selection process. Even when he was included on the search committee short list of eight last fall, he said, he did not think "this would go anywhere."

He resigned as chairman of the Implementation Task Force in late February when the search committee

identified him as the leading candidate.

Other Baptist leaders have defended the process that produced Reccord's nomination.

"There was no reward system or anything of that nature," said Bill Hogue, chairman of the incorporators group, which functioned as the search committee. The group entered the process with a "blank sheet," he told reporters.

Hogue, retired executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention, said the search group discussed the issue of Reccord's role in the restructuring. "We came to the conclusion early on that we would not make a decision (based) on who was involved or not involved." The overriding concerns, he said, were the "quality of the individual" and the sense that "this was God's man, above everything else."

While Reccord's work with the ITF "was not a consideration on the part of the incorporators," Hogue added, "The knowledge that he attained through his leadership role with the ITF would help him" in the NAMB job.

"No one has a vision for reaching America like Bob Reccord," said SBC president Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla.

Noting that "new challenges require new organization," Elliff said NAMB will bring a new way of "harnessing resources, energies, the heart and desire of Southern Baptists for reaching this continent for Christ."

Reccord, accompanied by his wife, Cheryl, said he was "humbled and sobered" by his nomination. He said the work of the NAMB will be "tremendously exciting and amazingly fruitful if God's blessing is on it."

Reccord and SBC officials acknowledged that the creation of NAMB was

neither easy nor painless. Using an illustration of a woman having a baby, Reccord said there is no "delicate way to birth an organization."

Emphasizing that the approach of NAMB will be to serve churches, Reccord added, "We will ask, 'What do you in the field need?'"

"We will work in harmony with state conventions and associations, so that it's not just a top-down, prepackaged item that we hand down."

Financial impact

Current ITF chairman John Yarbrough said the Home Mission Board and Radio & Television Commission will bring some cash reserves to NAMB when it is organized, while the current estimate is that the Brotherhood Commission will have a \$57,000 deficit. However, the Brotherhood Commission's building in Memphis, Tenn., is for sale and that amount would be given to NAMB when sold.

A Norfolk native and pastor of the Norfolk congregation since 1992, Reccord is a graduate of Indiana University and earned the master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been pastor of several churches, including Bell Shoals Baptist Church in Brandon, Fla., and Carmel Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C.

In 1977, Reccord went to work for the Home Mission Board as director of witness training, eventually serving under Hogue, then director of the evangelism section. He left the HMB in 1979 to become director of leadership training for Evangelism Explosion International. He then became vice president of sales and marketing for Chemecto, Inc., in Detroit, Mich., later returning to the pastorate.

ATLANTA (ABP/BP)

ITF leaders continue cuts, offers for potential NAMB employees

Professional staff members at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission are learning if they have new assignments with the North American Mission Board.

About 80 people were invited to attend a one-hour meeting April 16 in which they were offered positions in the new agency, to be created in June by a merger of the HMB, Brotherhood Commission and Radio & Television Commission. Similar meetings were held April 22 at the RTVC offices in Fort Worth, Texas.

An Implementation Task Force appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee has been overseeing creation of the new mission board. That task force has held all its meetings behind closed doors and has communicated with Southern Baptists only through periodic pre-approved news releases issued through Baptist Press.

"There is an exciting vision emerging from the future NAMB team members that is inspirational," task force chairman John Yarbrough reported. "Those people offered positions are ones we feel will best fit the requirements and opportunities available in the North American Mission Board. God is building an effective management team from among some of Southern Baptists' most outstanding servants."

The April 16 meeting was preceded by a morning chapel service in which former Southern Baptist Convention president Adrian Rogers spoke about the dangers of "murmuring against leaders."

The 80 individuals invited to the meeting included at least 11 Brotherhood Commission staff members, who were notified two days before and given airline tickets from Memphis, Tenn., to Atlanta to attend the meeting. About 50 professional staff members from the HMB have not been offered positions with NAMB. Of those, a few are retiring but most remain in limbo.

According to HMB spokesman Martin King, some of those as yet uninformed

could be alternate choices for positions that have been offered to someone else first.

"We have been told there is a large group of people who are alternates for positions," King explained. "So they're making offers first to those people who were in the meeting yesterday. We've been told they have alternates for every position."

In addition to the 80 existing HMB and Brotherhood staff members already offered jobs, the task force overseeing creation of the new agency reportedly is offering jobs to about 40 people not presently working for one of the existing agencies. A sub-group of the task force, composed of Yarbrough, Bill Hogue of California and Mike Hamlet of South Carolina, has been handling personnel matters.

The ITF members conducted a group meeting to present each potential NAMB employee with an envelope containing a letter stating the title of the position the person was being offered and the position's salary and benefits. Each packet also included details of severance benefits should the employee decline the offer. Employees were given five days to accept or decline the offers.

Hogue explained during the meeting that although those in attendance are being recommended for positions, actual employment will depend on NAMB trustees' adoption of the new agency's proposed bylaws at their inaugural meeting June 19.

While some employees were offered positions similar to their current positions, others were assigned to entirely different areas. Likewise, some work units appear barely changed while others will see extensive staff changes.

No figures have been released on the total number of HMB support staff members terminated or offered new jobs, but by the end of the first week of notifications, 59 had been offered new jobs and 39 had been terminated. The new agency will employ about 165 fewer people than the three agencies combined currently employ. ATLANTA (ABP/BP)

Those people offered positions are ones we feel will best fit the requirements and opportunities available....

JOHN YARBROUGH
Chairman
Implementation Task Force

Historical Commission trustees hold final meeting, honor legacy

Twenty-six trustees of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission gathered with the 10 members of the commission staff April 21 for an emotional final annual meeting of the agency.

The focus of the meeting was to complete the transfer of the commission's work to the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives and the Southern Baptist Historical Society following the close of the commission. The Historical Commission will be closed June 19 as mandated by SBC messenger approval of the convention's "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring plan.

Trustees approved a recommendation that all assets of the Historical Commission not otherwise assigned be transferred to the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives after the commission is closed.

"When I was asked to serve as a trustee of the Historical Commission, I was overwhelmed (to be a) part of a group such as this," noted Michigan trustee Sherry Parrish. She wept openly as she spoke of working with "such distinguished people" as the commission staff and trustees.

"Although this is a very sad occasion, I have every confidence that...God will preserve (our work)," she said.

Slayden Yarbrough, the commission's interim executive director, commended the staff for undergoing heavy burdens even before the dissolution of the commission was announced both in their personal lives and with the declining health and subsequent death of the commission's former longtime executive director Lynn E. May Jr.

Trustees approved a schedule of payment to the commission's staff of an incentive check on April 29, a severance/early retirement check on May 14 and an annual bonus check on May 28 as approved by trustees during their 1996 annual meeting.

The meeting concluded with a celebration event hosted by Historical Commission trustees for former and current staff of the agency and their families, former and current trustees of the commission and other special guests.

"We can all look back with pride, knowing that the Historical Commission fulfilled its assignments with competence and care," Yarbrough concluded, "and in so doing we served not only Southern Baptists but the cause of God's kingdom."

NASHVILLE, TN (BP)



Chuck and Katrina Cox, members of Highland Heights Church in Benton, helped introduce TeamKid and Royal Ambassador projects to children of East Bavaria Baptist Church in Ehenfeld, Germany, during a February mission trip.

State of the partnership

Arkansas Baptist churches continue to lend leadership, presence to European Baptists

The first part of 1997 has shown the strength and diversity of the missions partnership between Arkansas Baptists and the European Baptist Convention, said ABSC coordinator Doyle Plummer. With a variety of ministries already completed this year, he said he looks forward to the typically busy summer season for projects.

Plummer reported that through April, 11 partnership projects had either been completed or were in progress. The diversity of projects included 32 Arkansas Baptists participating in three interim pastorates, three revivals/evangelists, leadership training, an on-site coordinator in Europe, leadership for a pastor/wife conference, a construction team and leaders for an Experiencing God Weekend.

Among Arkansas Baptists traveling to minister in Europe were groups from Highland Heights Church in Benton, First Church in Harrison and First Church in Cabot.

The team of 10 from Highland Heights traveled to Ehenfeld, Germany, in February to conduct several projects for members of Highland's partner church, East Bavaria Baptist Church.

The Benton team led a variety of ministries. Pastor Steve Butler taught Sunday School organization, while he and

his wife, Barbara, led a marriage enrichment retreat. Member Jarvis Harper led training for Bible study workers. Other team members led children's ministries. Minister of music Richard Rose and his wife, Nancy, taught the children's musical, "Hans Bronson's Gold Medal Mission," while members Chuck and Katrina Cox, Vicki Edmonson and Harper introduced TeamKid, Royal Ambassador crafts and preschool day programs.

Team member Rose said the group also received some publicity back home in Arkansas for the team's ministries.

"Bobby Edmonson and Kristin Terrell (a reporter from Channel 11 in Little Rock) videoed material to be used in news reports," he explained. "They produced stories that were shown after the team returned to Arkansas. News segments ran on the 10 o'clock news February 24-26... and appeared during the early morning news."

Rose noted that the Ehenfeld congregation "is made up primarily of military families. The congregation meets in a German guesthouse. Members live on the military posts and in communities in the area, some as far as 100 kilometers away."

He also emphasized the great need for the trip. "It is the only English-speaking Southern Baptist work in that part of

Germany. Some of the men recently returned from tours of duty in Bosnia which prompted the need for the marriage enrichment retreat."

While the Highland Heights team was in Ehenfeld, a team of four from First, Harrison, travelled to Kitzingen (Germany) Baptist Church to make an on-site visit and to give direction in church leadership.

Team member Larry Brandt, First's partnership coordinator, said the team provided preaching through First pastor Jim Perkins, music through member Sam Lewis, and church administration advice through himself and Bob Wheeler.

Brandt said the group found the Kitzingen church "financially sound" and that direction was their main need. "The only area where they need assistance in our opinion is in the area of mentoring or counseling from...more experienced Christians. Their congregation is dominated by young members with an estimated average age of 24."

While the church does not have a pastor, he noted, "They have one ordained minister and one or two others who can preach to give them God's message."

Following the team's return, First Church members voted March 22 to enter a three-year partnership with the Kitzingen church. Brandt said First Church plans to send a second, 12-person team to Germany in July to conduct seminars in marriage enrichment, Experiencing God and financial management, as well as Bible studies and children's programs.

'Servant spirit' affirmed

An eight-member team from First, Cabot, made an April trip to Sofia, Bulgaria, to conduct a construction and painting project for a national Baptist church there.

The team's work prompted Southern Baptist foreign missionary Roger Capps to remark about the "servant spirit" of the group that showed "we genuinely knew why you came to Bulgaria."

Theodor Angelov, president of the Baptist Union of Bulgaria, agreed. "The visit...was an example of Christian support and expresses the very heart of the partnership. Their diligent work in painting of the Baptist church building in Sofia and their spiritual support have created a live and warm atmosphere during their visit.

"In a time of deep economic crises in Bulgaria when a lot of people are suffering through the huge inflation, the group...has encouraged the people in the church in

Sofia with their strong witness for Jesus Christ."

In addition to individual church partnership ministries, Arkansas Baptist women collected money to send Bibles for the "Bibles to Europe" missions project.

"During our SUMMIT '96 meeting last fall, we gave Arkansas Women on Mission the opportunity to purchase pew Bibles to be sent to EBC churches," said Monica Keathley, an associate in the ABSC Women's Missionary Union department. "We are sending 792 Bibles...and most will be sent immediately to seven EBC churches." Those churches included congregations in Germany, Russia, the Netherlands, Hungary and Poland.

While Arkansas Baptist churches are gearing up for several summer missions projects to Europe, Plummer emphasized that there are many needs still unmet through the partnership.

Topping his list of needs are challenges and opportunities presented in Bulgaria because of recent free elections.

"Under communism, they kept evangelicals suppressed and after communism the leaders were the same," he explained. "The people called for a free election and were held on April 19. From all indications, it will be a truly democratic government."

The election's results, he said, may mean more open doors for Baptists to minister. "I see Bulgaria as a place of the greatest impact Arkansas Baptists could have through the partnership, if it opens up."

Because of Bulgaria's poor economy, Plummer noted that Arkansans could sponsor a Bulgarian pastor for \$20 a month, which he called "a good salary" there.

Another opportunity in Bulgaria is the need for support of a Turkish work through building and pastoral support in the country. A large group of Turkish Baptists already exists in Sofia and meets in a tin shed.

"About 1.5 million of Bulgaria's 8.5 million population is Turkish," explained Plummer. "Our opportunity to minister to a large segment of the Bulgarian population is good."

In other EBC ministry opportunities, Arkansas partner churches are needed for churches in: Munich, Germany, a congregation primarily of African refugees; Bielefeld, Germany, a new work in a British military area; and Paris, France, a well-established international work.

Also needed are interim pastors for 15 churches in Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, Italy and the Azores.

For more information on how Arkansas Baptist churches can minister in Europe or a list of partnership needs, contact Plummer or Harry Black toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5190.

Retired Arkansas pastor Al Major serving second interim in Europe

Al Major used to think "people were supposed to be shelved" at age 70, but at 73, the retired Arkansas pastor, and his wife, Beth, began their second interim pastorate with a European Baptist Convention church.

Major, who served as pastor of Barton Church and as an interim pastor for an EBC church in Prague, Czech Republic, for a year in 1995-96, answered the call to serve as pastor of International Baptist Church in Naples, Italy, effective Jan. 1.

Major is one of a dozen experienced Arkansas Baptist pastors who have volunteered to serve as interims through the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's partnership with the EBC. Interim pastors are among the most requested partnership needs by EBC churches, primarily due to the lack of trained pastors overseas.

Major said that since coming to his new ministry field, he has had to face the challenges of limited resources and members in serving as pastor.

The church, formerly known as Calvary Baptist Church, was started in 1974 in Pozzuoli, Italy, with the help of Southern Baptist foreign missionary Fred Anderson. The congregation soon moved to Naples and thrived, growing to 150 members.

"Then there were a series of reverses," Major explained, including "a large military withdrawal and the loss of a lease. By the end of 1996, the church had dwindled to three active families and was considering closing its doors."

Positive impact

The church's situation improved drastically, he observed, when their ABCS partner church conducted missions work there last year.

"Woodland Heights Church in Conway sent a team of workers to conduct a Vacation Bible School, preaching, teaching and testimonies that turned the church around" said Major. "The church is still talking about their wonderful Arkansas friends."

Major is ministering in a small sanctuary that is "a converted basement garage under the parsonage," he said, "with tile floors and plaster walls heated by one space heater and a gas fireplace. Seating space right now is 60, but with crowding of chairs it could be boosted to 75."

The church underwent its name change March 2 to reach out to the international community. Of the more

than a dozen families and two singles who attend, Major said members include "three Macedonian Muslims, three Nigerians, an Italian and a Brazilian."

While the church has seen some recent growth, it had to close its day care center "even though it was a much-needed ministry," he noted. "We simply did not have either the people nor the finances needed to keep the operation going. Now we are concentrating our limited resources on enlarging our Sunday School and training workers and disciples."

Even though the day care was closed, the Majors have initiated other ministries in its place. "Beth will start a Girls in Action group on Sunday afternoons and she will also start a class for ladies called 'Making Peace with Your Past,'" said Major, who has begun a "Survival Kit" course for new members and started an Experiencing God class.

He also noted that his new ministry field is quite different from Arkansas. Naples is located in the shadow of Mt. Vesuvius, the active volcano most famous for destroying the Roman city of Pompeii in 79 A.D.

"Naples...is a depressing city to live in. There is so much robbery of homes that the police don't even bother to answer a call that your house is being broken into. They simply do not have the personnel to check things out."

"With 30 percent unemployment, thievery is very high," he explained. "Our windows have steel shutters that roll down from the top. It is recommended to shut them any time you leave or go to another section of the house."

Traffic also proves troublesome in Naples. "At \$6 a gallon for gas, you would expect very little traffic, but it is very heavy. A car that is advertised as 'ideal for Naples traffic' can be translated: 'Every fender and door has at least one dent.'"

Major asked Arkansas Baptists to remember the congregation's efforts in reaching the military and international communities and "that the church can meet its budget and pay its high rent. Give thanks that with budget problems they still raised \$238 for their Little Moon World Missions Offering."

He also asked for prayer for him and his wife. Still far from "being shelved," Major said he remains in good health, "so being three years beyond our 70-year warranty, who am I to argue with the One who renews the warranty?"

Fort Smith church has new ministry focus after tornado

Colleen Backus

Assistant Editor, Arkansas Baptist

The tornado didn't hit his house, which was only two miles from the church. "When I arrived on the church field, I was surprised at the devastation," pastor Raymond Laramore recalled. The storm that struck the Fort Smith and Van Buren area on April 21, 1996, had wrecked havoc on the community surrounding his church, Trinity Baptist in Fort Smith.

"I spent the week visiting church members and different people in the community trying to help get their lives back together," he noted. Laramore also discovered that while some people in the community didn't know the 75-year-old church existed, after the storm hit, the church had an immediate opportunity to let people know that Trinity cared about them. "We have a mission here," Laramore explained. "The storm gave us a new focus of direction."

Even though the church was damaged, it was central to the operations of the Red Cross and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention disaster relief team. Baptist Men volunteers distributed food from the church and the church now has an ongoing food pantry ministry. Laramore, with the help of state missions department staff, began to lead members to respond to the needs of the changing community. Once a thriving church in the 1950s, the church had declined in recent years due to demographic changes in the community.

Now, a year after the tornado, the

church is using the post-storm ministry as a springboard to reach deep into that changing community. Sunday School attendance has already increased more than 30 percent. On Sunday, April 20, Trinity Church held a "Day of Thanksgiving and Praise," promoting the event throughout the community. Special activities like outdoor games for the children, music and a free lunch followed by a special service attracted almost 200 participants. Fort Smith mayor Ray Baker spoke at the service and proclaimed a day of prayer on the first anniversary of the tornado. The church followed the event with a tent revival from April 27 through May 1.

In addition to a guest book from the service, which will allow the church to contact members of the community, an Arkansas Baptist team helped the church conduct an area survey. State missions department associate Tommy Goode and ABCS Brotherhood director Harry Black assisted with the survey, which seeks to identify even more community needs.

"For me it was an opportunity to come back," noted Black, who had been involved in disaster relief efforts following last year's storm. "Coming back to do follow-up ministry is evidence that the church is taking the ministry another step — from the obvious physical needs to the spiritual."

"The people were very open when they found we were working with Trinity," Black added. "The church is trying to meet changing needs in a changing community."

"Even though the church was hit, they stayed involved with the community," Goode said. "There is hope after the storm."



Christian musicians aid community. Point of Grace and Wayne Watson held a benefit concert at Ouachita Baptist University April 16, raising \$17,000 to benefit Arkadelphia-area tornado victims. Point of Grace members Shelley Breen, Heather Floyd, Denise Jones and Terry Jones present the check to Arkadelphia mayor Mike Kolb, OBU president Ben Elrod and Ian Cosh, director of OBU's Center for the Family.

Children's music event highlights family worship

The 1997 Children's Music and Family Worship Celebration centered on "Families Strong in the Lord" by including the parents of participating children. About 100 of the 310 participants at the celebration, held April 19 at Park Hill Church in North Little Rock, were parents.

The program included preparation for the presentation of children's music, led by guest director Stephen Roddy, director of the Houston Children's Choirs and a special music emphasis by Lloyd Larson, a composer from Maple Grove, Minn., as well as special training sessions on conducting family worship.

It also included a closing worship session that event coordinator Peggy Pearson called "a celebration of families worshipping together."

Pearson, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department, said, "I thought it was neat how it came together in the final worship celebration. We used a family giving an example of worship and each child participated."

The program marked the first time that participating choirs were not adjudicated, noted Pearson, saying that participants spent their time preparing for the closing session.

Among parents attending the celebration were Ken Miles, bivocational minister of music for First Church in Sparkman, and his wife, Betsy.

As choral directors, said Ken, "We liked the choice of music pieces because the children enjoyed preparing...and the schedule variation of rehearsal and activity time so the children didn't get too tired of the rehearsals."

"The children we brought liked everything," Ken commented. "We also took two parents who had never attended a statewide children's music event. They were thrilled."

Betsy agreed. "I think the parents of our children appreciated the opportunity for their children to be involved in an event like this. Being from a small church, there aren't a lot of opportunities for them as in larger churches."

"It allows small churches like ours to take the few children we have to a valuable statewide music event," Ken added. "If we had to sing by ourselves, we would not have been able to participate."

Green Acres was the place to be

Tom 'Eb' Lester turns '60s TV fame into lifelong ministry tool

Tremis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

I first met Tom Lester nearly 20 years ago. I was a college student working as a reporter for a county-seat newspaper in west Tennessee. Tom, an actor living in Hollywood, was best known for his six-year role as "Eb," the hired hand on the '60s television series, *Green Acres*.

Our paths first crossed when he came to our community to share his Christian testimony during an areawide tent crusade. I was assigned the responsibility of interviewing Tom and writing an article about a TV star visiting our little town.

The next several hours proved to be pivotal in my personal Christian pilgrimage as I discovered Tom's heartfelt commitment to share God's impact on his life. By the end of that week's crusade services, I publicly accepted God's call to ministry and the Lord began to guide me into the field of Christian journalism.

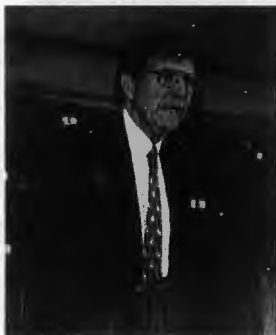
What does that have to do with 1997 and Arkansas Baptists? Tom has continued to share his testimony at churches, crusades and conferences throughout the nation. He recently was one of the featured speakers at Arkansas Baptists' 1997 Golden Age Evangelism Conference.

Program coordinator Paul McClung, acting director of the Arkansas Baptist evangelism department, granted me the privilege of introducing Tom before he spoke. Experiencing a flood of memories from that influential encounter two decades ago, I had the opportunity to recount a personal example of how God can use one person's obedience to influence another person's life — often without the first individual ever knowing the life-changing impact his actions have had on someone else.

Following the conference, my wife, Pam, and I spent several hours with Tom as he related what has happened in his life during the past several years.

Several years before our first visit together, Tom recalled that he felt "God put me on *Green Acres* for two reasons." The first was because of his natural acting ability and the second was to provide opportunities for him to share his faith in Christ.

Growing up in rural Mississippi, Tom was often told by friends that he was "too tall, too ugly and too thin" to be a Hollywood actor. Despite the overwhelming odds, he decided to move to Hollywood and eventually gained the part of "Eb" on *Green Acres*. The show soon



Actor Tom Lester was a featured speaker during Arkansas Baptists' 1997 Golden Age Evangelism Conference.

became a No. 1 hit. As his popularity grew, Tom began to have numerous opportunities to share his testimony.

Insisting that *Green Acres* was the place to be, Tom pointed out, "God knew this would give me opportunities to share His Word all across this country." Although the show was cancelled in 1971, Tom has continued to receive invitations to speak about his Christian pilgrimage.

Since *Green Acres* first went on the air in 1965, he has spoken at more than 1,000 churches. He also has shared his testimony during three Billy Graham crusades as well as the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference and youth evangelism conferences in several states.

During the past few years, however, his speaking schedule has slowed down. "Over the years, people have forgotten who I am," he shared. "I don't speak as much as I used to."

Despite the decrease, "I don't push myself" to gain speaking dates, he added. "My Christianity and my testimony is an experience and a relationship, not a business."

"It's just a faith thing," he explained. Yet with a constant desire to share what Christ has done in his life, he said, "It's always so wonderful to receive a letter or call to come and speak."

In the past year or two, *Green Acres* reruns on cable networks have gradually begun to give him name recognition with a new generation of TV viewers. In addition to *Green Acres*, he co-starred in the movies,

Benji and Gordy, as well as guest appearances on several other television shows.

Although he now spends most of his time back in his home state of Mississippi, Tom emphasized, "I'm more excited today than I was back then because of my life with Jesus Christ."

Looking back on past career accomplishments and setbacks, Tom remarked, "It's more wonderful to be able to share a personal testimony about Jesus Christ. That's what motivates me to do this — sharing my faith. I'm a tool. I'm His child. The best I can, I try to honor Him."

Acknowledging that "I would have been taken care of financially if I had remained in television," he explained, "I'm not concerned about any of that. It's been real interesting what is happening in my life. I'm available to do whatever God wants me to do."

As he has shared his Christian faith over the years, Tom said his primary goal is for listeners "to come to know Christ."

"I'd rather tell them how to get saved than tell them my testimony," he added. "I feel a real burden from the Lord to tell people in a very concise manner how to be saved."

"I try to help people understand that God makes us all very special and we all have unique gifts and talents. We need to discover what our gifts and abilities are and how Christ can use us."

Tom also seeks to remind people "what is happening to us as a nation. We're becoming so humanistic and we're totally deteriorating from within. We're going to have to come back to God."

"It's real easy to get cynical when you see sin so rampant in society," he noted. "But we always need to stand against sin and for the Lord. We don't need to back off the truth."

Although Tom isn't sure what the future holds for his career or ministry, he voices quiet confidence that God will continue to guide him.

"God's just blessed me so much," he affirmed. "Everywhere I go, I run into people who have known me. It makes you feel really good that the Lord uses you. It makes you realize how unworthy we are and yet God uses us."

After more than 30 years of telling others about God's work in his life, Tom said he is still "in a position of just growing in Christ."

Mc too, Tom. Thanks for your part in encouraging that growth 20 years ago — and today.

World missions

North Dakota floods: Baptist disaster relief volunteers respond

GRAND FORKS, ND (BP)—Southern Baptist disaster relief units from Texas, Ohio and Oklahoma rolled into Grand Forks, N.D., April 20 and began providing meals the following day for thousands of flood and fire victims.

With at least 70 percent of the city under water and a portion of its downtown gutted by fire, most of the city's 50,000 residents were ordered to evacuate April 18.

Pastors of all four Southern Baptist churches in the greater Grand Forks area related stories of their members being part of a communitywide effort to lead a hand where needed—working sump pumps, sharing portable generators when there was no electricity, filling and stacking sandbags to help shore up the city's dike system.

"You could say all we really have besides God is each other," said Henry Passmore, pastor of House of Prayer Baptist Church. He said most members of his congregation have relocated to Emerado, about 15 miles west of Grand Forks.

At nearby Grand Forks Air Force Base, as many as 10,000 evacuees will be staying in one of three hangars. Mike Waters, pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Emerado, has been asked by the Air Force chaplain's office to provide pastoral counseling and to lead some of the worship services in the hangars for the evacuees. Calvary Church also is housing the Texas Baptist disaster relief unit.

"Everybody up here is really appreciative of the Southern Baptist disaster relief crews that have come in," noted Preston North, director of missions for Eastern North Dakota Association.

BWA leaders protest violence against Romanian Baptists

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Baptist World Alliance has called on the Romanian government to investigate the lack of police protection when a group of nine Baptists in the village of Rugincoasa, Romania, were beaten by a crowd of citizens from a nearby village on Sunday, March 30.

Reports in one of the leading newspapers of the city of Montoiului de Iasi and on national television April 4 said about 700 people from the village surrounded a house used by Baptist believers for worship and another 150 people came from the neighboring village. When nine Baptists came out from the worship service, the crowd started to beat them. Among that group, the report said, were women and a 14-year-old girl. Media reports also indicate local police did not act quickly enough to protect the Baptists.

"The Baptist World Alliance is saddened by the news from Romania that the Romanian police and government were unable to protect the rights of the people," said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary.

The incident is among several recently that may reflect a growing intolerance by religious majorities in several European countries against religious minorities, Lotz said.

"Religious prejudice has no place in modern Europe," he said. "As Baptists, we have fought and died for religious freedom, and Romanian Baptists play a special role in this history of suffering prior to World War II.... Now is the time for justice and protection of the rights of all minorities, whatever their faith may be."

Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil dies in car wreck

FLORIANOPOLIS, BRAZIL (BP)—Wendell "Boots" Blackwell, a Southern Baptist foreign missionary to Brazil, died Sunday, April 20, in a traffic accident in Brazil.

Blackwell, 52, served as director of the evangelism and missions department of the Baptist state board in Santa Catarina, Brazil. He was returning from a preaching engagement when a vehicle reportedly crossed the highway center line and struck his car.

A former construction engineer and a native of Baton Rouge, La., Blackwell and his wife, Sherry, were appointed in 1981 by the Foreign Mission Board. He was a graduate of Louisiana College in Pineville and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Blackwell served as associate pastor and minister of education at Lanier Baptist Church in Baton Rouge prior to missionary appointment.

"This was a great, kind, hard-working servant of our Lord. He will be missed by many," said Ann Fallaw, associate director of the FMB's work in Brazil. "Our prayers are for his dear wife and their five children."

He is survived by his wife, the former Sherry Weeks of Mansfield, La.; two sons, Jonathan, 17, and Joshua, 14; three daughters, Jennifer, 19, Jodi, 15, and Jill, 12. Jennifer is a freshman at Ouachita Baptist University.

Southern Baptist aid helps hungry Bulgarians survive

SOFIA, BULGARIA (BP)—Southern Baptists have helped many Bulgarian Baptists survive a hard winter by providing \$130,000 worth of food and fuel through a relief program administered by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Bulgarian Baptists hope this kind of response from Baptists in other lands will do more than just help their needy countrymen. They hope the aid also will help them win respect from their government, which has maintained an anti-evangelical stance in recent years. Less government interference, Baptist leaders say, will produce more evangelism and church growth.

One positive sign amid the current crisis, Baptist leaders said, is government permission to receive aid from evangelical Christian organizations outside the country. Such aid previously had been banned.

Since November more than 28,000 food parcels provided by Southern Baptist hunger funds have been distributed by the Bulgarian Baptist Union. About 4,000 Baptist families are receiving a monthly packet of basic foods and \$6 in local currency to help pay heating costs. In one recent month, each family received an extra food packet to be shared with someone outside the church membership.

"The people in the churches have expressed deep gratitude for this assistance and have prayed for the Lord to give them the possibility to return this blessing to other needy nations," said Paul Ridgway, a Southern Baptist foreign missionary based in Sofia.

Bulgarian Baptists have distributed more than \$320,000 in aid this winter. Baptists in Great Britain, Germany and other European countries have sent funds, and the Baptist World Alliance has provided help through its Baptist World Aid Program.

TRANSITIONS

Thomas Jefferson Cunningham III began his ministry March 27 as pastor of First Church of McGehee. He previously served First Church of West Memphis and Life Line Church of Little Rock as well as other churches in Arkansas and Tennessee. Cunningham is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, the University of Central Arkansas, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Mid-America Seminary. He has served on the board of trustees for Memphis Baptist Hospital Systems and Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries. He and his wife, Susan, have two children, Tom and Rebecca.

Tim Richardson is pastor of First Church of Coal Hill, coming there from First Church of Mount Ida where he was serving as minister of youth and music. He and his wife, Maria, have two children, Latasha and Caleb.

Eddie McCord is serving as bivocational pastor of First Church of Oden. He is the retired director of missions for Independence Association and a trustee of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*. McCord and his wife, Marge, reside in Mount Ida.

Wayne McDuffee will retire May 31 as director of properties for Central Church in Jonesboro, following 12 years of service.

Raymond Atwood of Jonesboro, a retired pastor and director of missions, is serving as interim pastor of West View Church of Paragould.

Max Gregory, retired director of missions for Current Gains Association, is serving as interim pastor of Light Church.

George Fink, who has resigned as interim pastor of Lakeshore Church of Hughes, is available to serve as a supply preacher. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 13, Vandale, AR 72387; phone 501-238-0902.

CHURCH LIFE

Lake Ouachita Church near Mount Ida dedicated its new family life center March 30 in memory of Durward Hester. The sale of property donated to the church by Hester provided funds needed to build the 14,240-square-foot facility which includes 13 Sunday School classrooms, three offices, a gymnasium, game room, choir room and restrooms. The day of the dedication service the church set a new attendance record with 157 in Sunday School and 300 in the worship service which began with the baptism of three individuals. There were five other decisions during the service, including four professions of faith and one addition by letter. Roy Brooks is pastor.

Wrens First Church will celebrate 100 years of ministry with a special morning worship service June 8 that will be followed by a noon meal and musical program.

Parisdale Church will observe homecoming May 18 with a worship service to be followed by a potluck dinner. Billy Kite, retired director of missions for Ashley Association, will be the guest speaker.

Russellville First Church staff member Danny Lyons assisted Fay Clements of Bob Clements Association in Austin, Texas, in coordinating a recent mission trip to Bangalore, India, that resulted in more than 5,700 professions of faith. The mission team included 16 Arkansas Baptists from churches in Russellville, Clinton, Havana, Rover and Springdale, as well as volunteers from Texas, Virginia and Colorado.

Southside Church of Fordyce observed its 42nd anniversary April 13 with a "Blessings" service for which former pastor John Hurd was the speaker. Lunch was served at noon and Gerald Totty directed the 1:30 p.m. music program. Pictures of pastor Charles H. Jones and former pastors were displayed in the church foyer as part of the celebration.

MILESTONES

Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church in Hot Springs, has been unanimously re-elected as chairman of trustees for Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Rogers is former president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Russell H. Dilday, associate editor of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, recently earned two awards during the 1997 annual meeting of Baptist Communicators Association. Dilday received a second-place award in interpretive reporting for his four-part series, "Forced Terminations: Seeking Peace Amid the Pain." He received an honorable mention for his design of a brochure, "Shaping the City for Christ." This marks the second year in a row that the *Newsmagazine* staff has been honored in the national awards competition.

Margie Mattox of Park Hill Church in North Little Rock was honored with an afternoon reception April 27 in recognition of her retirement as a Sunday School teacher, following 29 years of service.

ORDINATIONS

Pleasant Valley Church of Shirley ordained Clifton Bolden, Connie Mack Harper and Alton Joyce as deacons March 23.

Wilson First Church ordained Rodney Cissell as a deacon April 6.

Valley Church of Searcy ordained Blake Betts to the gospel ministry April 13. Betts, a student at Williams Baptist College, is serving as youth minister for Cockleburr Church.



Rose Bud First Church recently burned an \$82,000 note to celebrate the completion of improvement projects with an appraised value of \$236,000. The projects have included the construction of a fellowship hall and educational building and the purchase of additional property. Participating in the noteburning service were building committee members (left to right) Junior Childers, Mike McGary, Jack Majors and James Bradley. Pastor Bruce Brown said former pastor Harrel Cato and Jim Hill, retired director of missions for Calvary Association, also provided leadership throughout the projects.

Parks featured speaker at state CBF annual meeting

We are doing missions in a new/old way," Keith Parks told approximately 200 participants at the fifth annual Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas General Assembly, held April 25-26 at Pulaski Heights Church in Little Rock.

Parks, missions coordinator for national CBF, preached from Luke 7 during the Friday night session, adding that, "This defines what a bunch of Christians ought to be about. Jesus' coming was to do what God wanted to do."

"That's still the purpose of the church: The good news of salvation preached to those despised or neglected," he said. "If we bring the good news to them, we will inevitably bring it to the rest of the people."

Parks explained that Jesus also ministered in a new/old way. "Wherever there was hurting, Jesus poured out His love...not to bring converts, but simply because He couldn't help Himself."

"Jesus was functioning in a new/old way. The people hungered for the Messiah, but when Jesus lived it among them, they...thought it was new. Yet, He was reaching into the Old Testament. He did it the old way, but made it appear new."

Parks told the crowd about CBF's global missions efforts. "We focus on peoples, and particularly unreached peoples. We

think that those who have not heard the gospel ought to get a chance to hear it."

Emphasizing the danger missionaries face, he asked, "Does it appear strange to you that of our 142 missionaries, rioting and evacuation have taken place recently in three locations? We tell them, 'You are taking a risk taking the gospel to these people.' That's new, but it's pretty old and that's the way we are doing missions."

Other speakers included James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and Thomas

Clifton, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

Participants also attended break-out sessions, including such topics as "Giving to the CBF Through Your Church," "Global Missions," "Regional Aids Interfaith Network" and "Baptist Joint Committee."

They also affirmed Randy Hyde, pastor of Pulaski Heights, as CBFA moderator. Hyde was chosen last year as moderator-elect. Norma Caldwell, a member of First Church in Pine Bluff, was named as 1997-98 moderator-elect.

hope Strengthening Families for

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Camp for young musicians to emphasize godly families

Young Musicians Camp, to be held June 23-26 at Ouachita Baptist University, will attract the family with its focus on "Families Strong in the Lord," said event planner Peggy Pearson, an associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department. The camp is for children who have finished grades 4-6.

The camp will feature many regular events, Pearson noted, with some additions and changes. As usual, the program will include corporate worship and a choice of choirs and musicals, but each will be coled by couples to emphasize the family.

Campers will have the choice of participating in band, handbell choir, the God's Treasures Choir and speciality classes that Pearson said include "skills in... drama, orff instruments and choir chimes."

The cost is \$70 per camper or counselor and includes meals and lodging.

For more information or to register by May 27, contact Pearson at the ABSC church music ministries office toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABSC or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5121.

Statewide Ukulele Jamboree set for Baring Cross, NLR

The seventh annual Arkansas Ukulele Jamboree will be held May 17 at Baring Cross Church in North Little Rock. The program will include performances by bands throughout the day.

The cost for the Jamboree is \$10 per person and includes lunch and a booklet of ukulele arrangements sent in by Arkansas ukulele bands.

For more information or to register, contact Louis Criswell, associate pastor for senior adults and family life at Baring Cross, at 501-375-5333.



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TRAINING

Ouachita offers religion courses across state

Ouachita Baptist University has recently expanded efforts to reach into local communities with religion courses designed to provide additional training to ministers and laypeople in both degree and non-degree programs.

"We are pleased to serve the denomination at the local level," noted Ouachita president Ben Elrod. "We are gradually expanding the sites at which we are offering courses. Our goal is to provide the opportunity for additional training for any of our state's ministers or interested laypeople, and to provide an associate of arts degree for those who want a Ouachita education but can't come to Arkadelphia."

Ouachita has operated the Ouachita Center at Fayetteville for several years, but this semester courses also have been taught in Benton and Hot Springs. Plans are under way to offer courses in Texarkana and the El Dorado/Camden area next fall.

Ouachita will offer a religion curriculum at each location. The courses may count toward an associate of arts degree in religion or may be taken through OBU's Ministerial Training Program for students who would like to take specific courses, but do not plan to earn a degree.

The courses will be taught by full-time Ouachita professors commuting from Arkadelphia, as well as adjunct professors. Course content has been designed by the faculty of Ouachita's division of religion and philosophy.

Division chairman Bill Steeger, director of OBU's Center for Christian Ministries, describes the curriculum as "Bible-based, Christ-honoring, spiritually enriching, academically distinguished, church-serving, and academically and professionally balanced."

The Ministerial Training Program and associate of arts degree program will be supervised by Dennis Tucker, director of external programs. He said OBU officials "expect the program to grow to include many towns and cities across Arkansas."

Tucker said students should determine after the completion of two courses whether they would like to pursue the degree program. The 64-hour associate of arts program does not require residency at the Arkadelphia campus.

Most courses are assigned three hours of academic credit. Tuition is \$30 per semester hour and financial aid is available. Those interested in additional information may contact Tucker at 501-245-5199.

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Ouachita Baptist University

Grant for Indonesian program: Ouachita recently received a \$9,500 grant from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board through the Consortium for Global Education to help establish schools in Indonesia.

Beginning in the summer of 1998, OBU students and faculty will have the opportunity to spend three weeks in a small village community located in the rain forests on the island of Sumatra. Participants will

assist in building school facilities and help provide instruction to students.

Dann, Davis honored: OBU swimming and diving coach Jim Dann, who led his men's and women's teams to their best national finish in his Ouachita career, was recently named the 1997 NAAIA National Swimming and Diving

Coach of the Year.

Ouachita senior Carl Davis is one of six athletes from colleges and universities



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in the nation named to the 1997 NAAIA National Men's Swimming and Diving All America Scholar Athlete Team. Davis is a freestyle and fly swimmer at OBU.

Piano competition set: The 20th annual Ouachita Piano Competition in Performance will be held May 9 at 1 p.m. in McBeth Recital Hall in OBU's Mabee Fine Arts Center. Piano majors enrolled in the division of music at OBU are eligible to compete. The public is invited to attend.

Williams Baptist College

Bloomer presents lecture: Raymond Bloomer recently presented the first annual Mondy-Carroll Lecture at Williams Baptist College. Bloomer, professor of physics and astronomy at King College in Tennessee, spoke about "Modern Science and the Shroud of Turin."

Students present papers: WBC students Linda Hovis and Lana Bridges were selected to present papers at the 1997 Arkansas Symposium for Psychology Students April 11-12 at the University of Central Arkansas. The symposium featured presentations from psychology professionals and a select few students.

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Israeli embassies feel pressure against anti-evangelism bill

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL (BP)—Israeli embassies in several countries are feeling pressure over a proposed law that could severely limit freedom of religion in Israel.

Bill 8757-1996 proposes to set a one-year jail term for printing, copying, distributing or sharing tracts, or advertising "things in which there is an inducement for religious conversion."

"In Finland...we have just heard of 7,000 signatures to a letter of protest, and of a

planned interview with the Israeli ambassador there," said Baruch Maoz, a Messianic Jewish pastor helping rally forces against the bill.

The governments of Norway and Denmark also have questioned the bill, Maoz said. "The Israeli ambassador to Norway has written home to say that this proposed law could wreak intolerable damage on Israel's relations with friends in Norway," he added.

Baruch Binah, minister-counselor for public and inter-religious affairs at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, indicated the proposal has only a remote chance of success.

Although Jews in Israel generally resist evangelism, Israel has laws that protect free speech, Binah said. To validate such a law as the one proposed, he said legislators would have to change laws already on the books.

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NATION

CLC supports Istock revision of religious freedom amendment

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has agreed to support new language proposed by Oklahoma Congressman Ernest Istock as a religious freedom amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The April 21 announcement came two weeks after the Christian Life Commission sent to all members of Congress an analysis explaining why it refused to support language previously announced by Istock. The new proposal, which was finalized in an April 17 meeting that included Istock and CLC staff members, says:

"To secure the people's right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience: The people's right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs, heritage or traditions on public property, including schools, shall not be infringed. The government shall not require any person to join in prayer or other religious activity, initiate or designate school prayers, discriminate against religion, or pray a benefit due to religion."

While Istock and CLC president Richard Land affirmed each other's efforts to reach a consensus, they portrayed the changes somewhat differently.

"The scope and thrust of the new language remain consistent with the previous version of the Religious Freedom Amendment," Istock said in a prepared statement. "The changes in wording clarify the original safeguards of the amendment, making the protections more explicit while keeping the same meaning."

Land pointed to two specific changes that addressed CLC concerns.

"The phrase 'according to the dictates of conscience' has been restored to the amendment's first sentence," Land said. "This is absolutely critical because the phrase is not just a collection of words but rather encapsulates in summary form the Baptist conviction that every man and every woman has a God-given right to express and practice his or her faith in accordance with their own conscience without interference from government."

"The clarification that it is 'the people's right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs' rather than the government's right to do so is an important and extremely helpful clarification," Land added.

Some church-state and religious groups remain opposed to any constitutional amendment on religious liberty, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

YOUTH

Super Summer urges students to 'get real'

Arkansas Baptists' 1997 Super Summer Evangelism Schools will challenge students to "Get Real" during two sessions of evangelism training that combine an academic atmosphere with a summer camp setting.

Super Summer will offer two sessions on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University: Super Summer, June 17-21, for students who have completed the eighth through 12th grades; and Super Summer JV, June 15-17, for students who have completed the sixth and seventh grades.

Randy Brantley, youth associate for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention evangelism department, said the focus of the schools will be to urge students to "get real" in their world through evangelism training. "In a world full of hopelessness, emptiness, deceit and broken relationships, people are looking for something real....We must get serious and live what we say we believe."

Super Summer will offer participants a variety of training options. Senior high school students may attend the regular Super Summer school or an optional Advanced Evangelism School offered only to juniors or seniors who have attended a previous Super Summer session.

Separate Youth Ministry Schools will be held for youth workers during both weeks of Super Summer, Brantley added, noting that the training will specialize in leadership development.

In addition, high school students and their leaders may attend up to three of 23 available seminars that include the topics of witnessing, moral purity, gambling, abortion, divorce, Christian beliefs, dating, honesty and calling to the ministry.

The cost for Super Summer is \$95 per Arkansas student or adult or \$115 per out-of-state student or adult prior to May 23. The cost for Super Summer JV is \$50 per Arkansas and \$60 per out-of-state participant. A \$15 late registration fee will be added to all registrations received after May 23.

The cost includes all meals, housing, materials and recreational facilities. Participants must bring their own bedding, towels; toiletries, Bible, writing materials and spending money.

For additional information, contact Brantley at the ABCS evangelism department toll-free in state at 1-800-838-ABCS or locally in Little Rock at 376-4791, ext. 5222.

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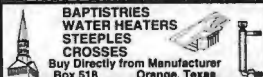
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- Don Moseley, First Baptist Church of Sylvan Hills, North Little Rock, AR

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Concert to aid prison chapel

A Christian concert called "Celebrate Hope" will be held May 17 at the "Gymnasium" of New Covenant Fellowship on Ridgeway Road in Pine Bluff. The event will be a benefit concert to help raise funds to build a chapel facility at Varner Prison.

"We are in urgent need of a chapel facility and office space," explained prison chaplain Ross Woodbury. "This concert is one of many strategies we plan to use to raise funds for the chapel project."

Featured performers will include the

"Prodigal Daughters" from the Tucker's Women's Unit as well as other singing groups and soloists. Former prisoners will also give testimonies about God's work during their incarceration.

The concert, which will begin at noon, is designed to be an informal drop-in event that will end at 6 p.m. Admission is free. Offerings will be taken to benefit the chapel building effort.

Additional information is available by calling chaplains Eugene Triplett or Ross Woodbury at 479-3311, ext. 459.

Seeking — Grand Avenue Baptist Church in Ames, Iowa, is seeking a full-time youth minister. Must be male and married. College and/or seminary degree preferred. Please send resumes to Grand Avenue Baptist Church, 612 24th Street, Ames, Iowa 50010 or e-mail to grandbapt@aol.com.

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Accepting resumes — Kansas City, Missouri, area church is currently seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Send resumes to: Personnel Committee, Linden Baptist Church, 611 NE 68th, Kansas City, MO 64118.

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Family Bible God will see His children through

By Grant Ethridge, pastor,
First Church, Lavaca

Basic passage:
Revelation 7

Focal passage:
Revelation 7:1-4, 9-17

Central truth:
In times of tribulation, God will see His children through.

Life and Work Truths about spiritual gifts

By Taylor Magar, pastor,
First Church, Star City

Basic passage:
Romans 12:3-10; 1 Cor. 1:1-13;
Eph. 4:2-16; 1 Peter 4:8-11

Focal passage:
1 Cor. 12:1-13; Eph. 4:12-13;
1 Peter 4:10

Central truth:
The Holy Spirit equips Christians for spiritual service.

Explore the Bible Revel upon God

By Katsy McAlister, member,
First Church, El Dorado

Basic passage:
Isaiah 30

Focal passage:
Isaiah 30:1-5, 8-14

Central truth:
God expects obedience from His followers.

Life is filled with winds of trouble and storms. But God is very much at work in the midst of the tribulation. God has always had a remnant to be His witness for Him. Can God count on you today to stand even in the face of persecution?

A seal in scripture indicates ownership or protection. When we were saved, God sealed us with His Holy Spirit. This is His guarantee that we are safe as His children. During the Great Tribulation, the ungodly will have the mark of the beast. The 144,000 will have the seal of God on their foreheads. The enemy will be unable to harm them without God's permission. Today the devil and his demons cannot do anything to us without God's permission.

Another group mentioned is made up of Gentiles. Salvation is for all who will believe, both Jew and Gentile. These will be in Heaven not because of their works but because of the blood of the Lamb.

Their rejoicing caused the angels to rejoice.

God has not established His church and then left us to our own devices. By His Spirit, He equips us with gifts for spiritual service. The following are just a few truths about spiritual gifts.

While gifts are diverse, there is only one Giver (1 Cor. 12). With a cursory reading, we find that every Christian has at least one gift, but not everyone has the same gifts, nor does anyone possess all the gifts. Just as the body is made up of many members, likewise the church consists of many gifts. Just as the parts of the body are interdependent in order to function, so is the local church. This diversity is given for the "common good."

There is only one head. One cannot help but see a trinitarian pattern in verses 4-6. Notice that "gifts," "services" and "workings" are all different expressions, with each illuminating the other's meanings. On the other hand, it is the "same" Spirit, the "same" Lord (meaning Jesus), and the "same" God who gives these "different kinds." This emphasizes the divine origin of the gifts.

Senacherib had marched through Judah and destroyed all of her cities except Jerusalem. Judah was making an alliance with Egypt, seeking protection against the Assyrians. Isaiah warns Judah that these alliances are ungodly and they should be putting their trust in the Lord instead of Pharaoh.

Could we say the Lord finally became fed up with Judah and her rebellion? His people had not responded to anything that He had done. In verse 8, the Lord tells Isaiah to write it all down so that future generations would be able to know all that He had done and what the consequences would be — Judah was to be crushed.

They had paid no attention to prophets or visionaries the Lord had sent. Re-read verse 10 and see if you recognize any modern-day churches in this verse. Do God's people want their preachers to preach only messages with hope and entertain them?

In the Third Punic War, Scipio the Younger led the Roman armies and totally destroyed the Cartha-

Our worship should influence others to worship.

Notice, they were rejected on earth but they are rewarded in heaven. It is a privilege to represent the Lord Jesus and even suffer persecution for His name's sake. In fact, times of tribulation give us a greater opportunity to witness.

The next time you are going through a difficult time, remember it will not last forever. If you are faithful, you will come out of it better and stronger. Meditate on the power that is in the blood of Jesus. Sing hymns and choruses about the blood of Jesus. It will never lose its power.

Finally, trust God to meet your every need. He will see you through!

Gifts are grace gifts, not rewards. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in granting gifts. He "gives them to each one as He determines" (II Cor. 12:11). The term used to describe the Spirit's gifts (v. 4) is the same root as the Greek word for grace. They do not originate in you, but are initiated by God. They are freely and graciously bestowed by God. They are not earned or learned, but given.

Gifts are given to serve others (1 Peter 4:10). A gift is to be used to build up the body of Christ. They are used to edify the church, not glorify the individual. They are given to prepare God's people for works of service (Eph. 4:12).

The primacy of love over gifts (1 Cor. 13). Love is not a gift, but a virtue; it's the more excellent way. Without love, the exercise of your gift is vain and void, for no one benefits from its practice. Love supersedes gifts, for it is eternal.

These truths are by no means an exhaustive discourse on spiritual gifts, but hopefully they will give you something to consider as you render your spiritual service.

genians. The survivors were sold into slavery, the city razed, every stone broken, and then the site was plowed under. Often following the destruction of a city there are building stones or parts of it that can be re-used. In verse 14, we are told how utterly crushed the city would be; not even a shard of pottery would be found. Like Carthage, Jerusalem is warned that it would be totally demolished; there would be nothing left of the city that would be usable. Such total destruction as this is hard for us to imagine, but God will totally destroy them to teach them the necessity of following Him.

Judah trusted in her own power and political alliances. Isaiah repeatedly calls her to return her trust to God but Judah refuses to listen.

In these passages we see God revealed to us as a God of judgment, demanding obedience. We can respond to God's demand by putting our trust in Him and not in our own power or upon others. Just as parents expect their children to obey, God expects obedience from His children.

LESSONS FOR LIVING

God will bring justice one day and every wrong will be made right. In that day, saints will be shouting, "Hallelujah!" The servants of God will be vindicated and sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Weddings are always exciting and this is a banquet you do not want to miss.

Jesus is coming as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to defeat His enemies through the power of His word. That should encourage every believer to know Jesus now by getting into the Word. There is power in the Word of God.

Satan will be bound for a thousand years to deceive no more. He certainly is not bound today, for many are deceived. If the devil is chained now, it would have to be a long chain because he is constantly tempting and accusing. The good news is that while the devil was not chained at Calvary, he was defeated!

Believers will live with Christ a thousand years. The curse of creation will be removed. Our prayer will be answered, "Thy kingdom come." But we

do not have to wait until that day for Christ to reign in our hearts. You should acknowledge Him as Lord of your life today.

Many people view judgment day as a long line leading to the throne where all our works are placed on the scale. If the good outweighs the bad, you go to heaven and if the bad outweighs the good, you go to hell. That is simply not biblical. All those who reject Jesus Christ will stand before the Great White Throne judgment. God is keeping accurate records. Everyone whose name is not in the Lamb's book of life will hear Jesus say, "Depart from me, I never knew you." This should motivate us to pray for those who are lost and bring them to Jesus. It should also cause us to be thankful for saving grace!

Let us differentiate between gifts of the Spirit and fruit of the Spirit. The former are abilities given to believers for service, while the latter are virtues found in the life empowered by the Spirit. Here they are found in three triads of threes and are probably not exhaustive (see Col. 3:12-17).

■ **Relationship to God.** Love, peace and joy are the result of a right standing with God. Love heads the list in which the other virtues could be seen as an expression of this primary and basic trait (Romans 5:5, I Cor. 13). It is the same sacrificial benevolence that God demonstrates toward us, which we are to demonstrate toward others. Joy is the inward peace and assurance that comes from trusting God, a sense of well-being or soundness. Peace is the by-product of our relationship with God (Romans 5:1).

■ **Relationship with others.** Patience, kindness and goodness are acts and attitudes directed toward our "neighbor." Negatively, patience is restraint from the urge to retaliate, positively it is forbearance. Kindness takes it a step further, it is to

treat people with tenderness, just as God has treated us (Eph. 4:32). Its companion, goodness, acts with generosity even toward those who are unlovable or undeserving.

■ **Relationship to ourself.** Faithfulness, gentleness and self-control all have to do with the believer's life in the circumstances about him. To be faithful means that one is reliable, trustworthy, and that one can be depended upon to keep one's word. Gentleness is the spirit necessary for the believer to learn (James 1:21). It is associated with meekness, which means power under control that accepts discipline. Self-restraint or control is mastery over one's appetites, whether physical or sensual.

These same virtues were found in Jesus Christ. So to bear fruit of the Spirit is to live a Christ-like life. Against these traits there are no laws, for no one has any reason to fear a Spirit-controlled life.

Do you remember the old TV show called "What's My Line?" The participants would try to disguise themselves with evasive answers. At the end of the questioning the emcee would say, "Would the real individual please stand up." Life is like that sometimes; people put on such disguises that we can't be sure who they are. Many of us play parts and wear masks at work, when dealing with friends and family, or wear a religious disguise to church.

Jeremiah is confronting the problem of pretense in worship in our focal passage. The people of Judah were coming to the Temple and going through the motions of worshipping Yahweh, but their lives did not demonstrate righteousness; they were following pagan practices. They were merely playing parts.

Judah's worship had become an empty ritual and not acceptable to God. Their daily actions were more like the pagans around them and God disapproved these forms of behavior. In Verse 11 Jeremiah notes that the Lord sees through this

empty worship and recognizes their paganism.

The Temple was also being used as a good luck charm. In verse 12 he mentions a place called Shiloh which had been the resting place for the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was brought from Shiloh by the Israelites when they were defeated by the Philistines. They believed that the Ark would protect them in battle. The Israelites were defeated, the Ark captured, and Shiloh was destroyed. Jeremiah emphasizes that the Temple cannot be used in this same way, just as insurance. He relates in verse 14 that the Temple will come to the same end as Shiloh.

Do we put on our "holy disguise" on Sunday and then act like the world throughout the week? The quality of a believer's response to God is an integral part of worship. We must concentrate on who we are and what God wants us to be and what we do will come out of that. When the "real individual" worships, his attitude and response will reveal his relationship with God.

Family Bible

How will it end?

By Grant Ethridge, pastor,
First Church, Lavaca

Basic passage:

Revelation 19:20

Focal passage:

Revelation 19:1-9, 11-16;
20:1-3, 4-6, 11-15

Central truth:

Joy awaits those who receive Christ and judgment awaits those who reject Christ.

Life and Work

Fruit of the Spirit

By Randy Megar, pastor,
First Church, Star City

Basic passage:

Galatians 5:13-26

Focal passage:

Galatians 5:22-26

Central truth:

Fruit of the Spirit are virtues found in the life empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Explore the Bible

The outcome of worship

By Katsy McAlister, member,
First Church, El Dorado

Basic passage:

Jeremiah 7:1-8:3; 9:23-24

Focal passage:

Jeremiah 7:1-15

Central truth:

Our lives will reflect our devotion to God.

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FamilyNet to broadcast National Day of Prayer event

FORT WORTH, TX (BP)—A three-hour "Concert of Prayer," part of the 1997 National Day of Prayer, will be televised from 7 to 10 p.m. May 1 by FamilyNet, the broadcast television service of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

The Concert of Prayer is sponsored by the National Prayer Committee, a 20-year-old nonprofit corporation committed to mobilizing prayer within the church in the United States. Its members represent a coalition of Christian leaders. The theme of the 1997 National Day of Prayer is "In God We Trust."

The Concert of Prayer will originate from The Church on the Way in Los Angeles. Last year 225 television stations, 3,000 cable systems, approximately 1,200 radio stations, Armed Forces Radio and Television and numerous satellites carried the prayer event. It was accessible to approximately 140 million homes.

Golden Gate trustees reverse plan to close music school

MILL VALLEY, CA (BP)—Trustees of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary have reversed their April 8 decision to close the seminary's Dixon School of Church Music, opting instead to restructure the music school to make it a "financially viable" part of the seminary program.

The new action was prompted by the voluntary resignations of church music faculty members Craig and Beth Singleton in hopes of keeping the school of church music open. Both the Singletons, whose resignations from active employment at the seminary are effective July 31, declined to make a public statement about their actions.

"Such a turn of events has obvious impact on the long-term financial concerns of the music school and warranted reconsideration of the matter by our Board," said seminary president William O. Crews. "We want to honor the steps initiated by our faculty as they seek the best interest of the seminary and the benefit of the churches."

Trustees approved the new action by phone poll over the April 18 weekend. "Their agreement was unanimous and a substitute motion was also unanimously adopted directing the president to restructure the church music program of the seminary in a way to make it financially viable," Crews said. At their spring meeting April 8, trustees had declared a "financial emergency" in the school of church music and directed Crews to close the music school by July 31.

Supreme Court weighs merits of parochial aid case

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Attorneys are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse a 1985 ruling in a case that legal experts say could redraw the constitutional boundary separating church and state.

In 1985, the Supreme Court ruled in *Aguilar vs. Felton* that using tax-paid teachers for remedial instruction at parochial schools violated the First Amendment by excessively entangling church and state.

In arguments April 15, lawyers for the New York City Board of Education and a group of parents contended the 1985 ruling is contradicted by subsequent decisions by the high court. Acting Solicitor General Walter Dellinger said allowing remedial instruction at parochial schools should not violate the First Amendment.

Stanley Geller, attorney for taxpayers opposed to on-site remedial instruction, said, "I don't believe religious school students have a free-exercise right to receive public funds."

Congress approves prohibition on assisted-suicide funding

WASHINGTON (BP)—Congress has voted overwhelmingly to prohibit federal funding for assisted suicide.

In a 99-0 vote April 16, the Senate approved the Assisted Suicide Funding Restriction Act. Six days earlier, the House voted 398-16 in favor of the legislation. The White House has indicated President Clinton will sign the bill.

The legislation bans the use of federal funds and facilities to promote, subsidize or provide assisted suicide or euthanasia.

"This is an important first step," said Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission consultant Ben Mitchell, "and it seems to acknowledge the linkage between assisted dying and economic considerations...While we believe we need stricter, more comprehensive legislation against assisted suicide, we applaud Congress for making efforts to turn back the assisted-suicide movement in this country."

**NEWS
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